DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 123 913 FL 007 735

AUTHOR Nalibow, Kenneth L.
TITLE Women's Surnames and Working Titles, the Opposition in Polish of Physical and Grammatical Gender.
PUB DATE Dec 75
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the conference of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (December, 1975)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Descriptive Linguistics; *Females; Form Classes (Languages); Grammar; *Language Patterns; *Language Usage; *Language Variation; *Polish; Sex Role; Sociolinguistics; Standard Spoken Usage
IDENTIFIERS *Gender (Grammar); *Names; Titles

ABSTRACT

In the contemporary standard Warsaw Polish of educated Poles, there is evidence of a system of gender-marking whereby masculine-gender nouns are being substituted for feminine professional names, working titles and surnames. The current usage is attributed to the change of status of the modern woman, or, more precisely, to her increased participation in social, economic and professional activities. The present study focuses on several troublesome areas connected with the masculinization of feminine-gender forms, such as the problem of inflection and the inherent problems of ambiguity concerning the sex of the referend. Examples are drawn from necrologies extracted from the contemporary Polish press. (Author/DB)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

. Kenneth L. Nalibow

ED123913

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

FL007735

WOMEN'S SURNAMES AND WORKING TITLES, THE OPPOSITION IN POLISH OF PHYSICAL AND GRAMMATICAL GENDER

It has been observed that in contemporary standard Warsaw Polish, there is evidence of a new system of gender-marking. Masculine-gender nouns are being substituted for feminine professional, working titles and surnames. This is an emerging pattern of usage for educated Poles. The current substitution of gender forms is attributed to a change in the social status of the modern woman, or more precisely, to her increased participation in social, economic and professional activities.[1]

A number of scholars have already addressed the problem of gender forms. These include Edward Stankiewicz, Roman Jakobson and Alexander Schenker. Gender marking for women's surnames has been discussed in Poradnik Językowy and Język Polski. Distinguished Polish scholars such as Kazimierz Nitsch, Eugeniusz Pawłowski, Witold Doroszewski, Antonina Obrębska-Jabłonska, W. Kupiszewski and K. DŁugosz-Kirczabowa and others have commented on this situation.

This new pattern of gender-marking has caused confusion among native speakers. Since Polish is an inflected language, surnames and working titles occur in the nominative as well as in oblique cases. The basic question is two-fold.
1) Does one inflect masculine-gender forms for women?
2) Is there any way of avoiding ambiguity as to the physical gender of the referend?

But the increase in frequency of masculine-gender referentials does not merely involve the obvious problem of grammatical mechanics--that is of the opposition of physical

and grammatical gender and gender marking. It can also engender changes in semantic meaning.

The masculine gender surname for a woman imparts a special, metaphoric, expressive meaning. It is more honorific. To understand how these levels of semantic meaning are determined, it is preemptory to quickly examine the traditional system of Polish gender-marking as it pertains to women's surnames.

Traditionally, the masculine-gender form of the surname is altered to indicate the relationship of a woman to a man or to indicate marital status. To surnames which are not adjectival forms and which are not of foreign origin, the suffixes -owa / -ina are added for wives; -ówna / -anka / -'anka are added for daughters. Thus, Patykowa is related to Patyk as wife, Patykówna is related to Patyk as daughter.

Names of non-Polish origin which fit the normal declensional patterns for masculine-gender surnames take suffixes: Fischer, Fischerowa (wife), Fischerówna (daughter). Surnames of foreign origin such as Pini, Boutroux, Lange which do not fit normal masculine-gender declensional patterns cannot be adapted to the system of suffication heretofore described. Such surnames must retain a fixed morphology. One form will refer to men or to women. Since Pini, Boutroux, Lange can refer to Ms, Miss, Mr., Mrs., an indication of marital status and/or sex of the referend must come from somewhere other than the surname.

In contrast to this, agreement of genus and sexus is inherent in surnames which have adjectival endings. The

adjectival ending -ski always refers to a man. The feminine-gender ending -ska must refer to a woman. To such surnames one does not add another system of suffixes. From the preceding explanation, it will be noted that:

1. Surnames with adjectival endings in -ski / -ska are always characterized by agreement between the physical gender of the referend and the grammatical gender of the surname. Thus: Jabłonski / Jabłonska; Krahelski / Krahelska.

2. Surnames of foreign origin which do not have masculine-gender declinsional patterns in Polish become fixed formations and apply to men or to women without indication of physical gender or marital status.

3. That category of surnames which can be expanded by suffixation is the one in question since it allows for a chouce of forms.

In practice, however, the system of gender-marking for surnames cannot be discussed alone. It is closely tied to a similar problem involving professional and working titles. The following statement is semantically correct. It contains a surname and a professional title:

Kowal jest profesorem języka rosyjskiego.

"Kowal is a professor of Russian."

Both Kowal and profesorem are masculine-gender forms. In equational statements of this type Kowal and profesorem could refer either to a man or to a woman. To indicate that Kowal is a woman, there would need to be some reference showing that Kowal is NOT a man.

In my recent statistical study which deals with

gender-marking in Polish, more than 400 necrologies were collected from the contemporary Polish press. Necrologies were used as the point of reference since each necrology constitutes a complete text. Within each text, even though entire sentences appear to refer to a man, there is at least one feminine-gender referential when the physical gender of the referend is feminine. A first name or surname often serves as the clue word.

In order to clearly visualize the relationship between genus and sexus, a special system was derived to correlate the materials. In my study, names, working titles, associated adjectives and past tense verbs are classified as being either norms or deviations. DEFINITION: A norm is defined as any word or group of words whose grammatical gender matches the physical gender of the referend to which it refers. A DEVIATION is defined as a word or group of words whose grammatical gender does not match the physical gender of the referend to which it refers. For example:

NORMS		DEVIATIONS
	W dniu 13 /trzynastego/stycznia 1969 r.	
zmarła	zmarła po długiej i ciężkiej chorobie	
Janina	Janina Polak,	Polak
	wieloletni i zasłużony	wieloletni,zasłużony
	pracownik Ministerstwa	pracownik
	Kultury. . .	
	"On January 13, 1969,	
died	died, after prolonged and grave	
Janina	illness, Janina Polak,	Polak
	a long-time and dedicated worker	a long-time,dedicated
	in the Ministry of Culture. . ."	worker

In the preceding text there are two clues indicating a female person. They are the past tense verb form zmarła and the first name Janina. Marital status is masked.

It must be noted that the gender-marking trend tends toward the use of so-called deviations. Were it not for stability in two gender-marking areas, such a trend would be categorized as one moving toward ambiguity. The two notably stable areas are: 1) past-tense verb forms, 2) first names.

Past Tense Verbs

In Polish, the past tense verb is said to agree with its subject in number and gender. Zmarła Jozefa Wrzodak. The verb here agrees with the first name. How then does one explain the statement: Zmarła profesor Zybert? Both title and surname are masculine-gender forms. In such a statement, the native speaker is indicating an awareness that Zybert is a woman. Here, the use of the masculine gender verb form would designate a man. Zmarł profesor Zybert.

It must be observed that gender-marking within a multi-sentence text is different from single sentence statements. After the physical gender of the referend has been established, gender marking redundancy may be absent. Except for one "clue" word, the entire text may be marked with masculine gender forms:

Zmarła profesor Szejer. Odszedł od nas zasłużony i ceniony pedagog.

"Professor Szejer died. There departed from us a dedicated and valuable pedagogue."

Zmarła establishes the referend as feminine. Since the second sentence is marked totally with masculine-gender forms, taking it out of context would be misleading. This is

a good example as to why this kind of study must be made on the basis of complete texts. Premeditated ambiguity does not appear to be a function of mixed gender marking per se.

First Names

In my study, first names form the most stable gender-marking category for female persons. Not once did a first name ever appear as a deviation. In the absence of a past tense verb, the first name is often the only clue to the sex of the referend.

2

Marii	Kol. /koleżance/ Marii Leśniak-Jackl, wyrazy głębokiego współczucia z powodu śmierci matki. . .	Leśniak-Jackl
Maria	"To colleague Maria Leśniak-Jackl, expression of deepest sympathy on the occasion of the death of (her) mother. . ."	Leśniak-Jackl

As an abbreviation, kol, possesses no inherent gender. Since both a masculine and a feminine form exist in Polish, it could refer to a man or to a woman. In this text, the only clue to the gender of the deceased is the first name Maria.

But this text is interesting in yet another way. The phrase Koleżance Marii Leśniak-Jackl is dative. The only declined word is Marii. The hyphenated surname and the abbreviation do not show dative function.

Without exception, the study indicated that masculine-gender SURNAMES refering to women remain undeclinable in oblique cases. The indeclinability of masculine-gender surnames must be contrasted with masculine-gender working and

professional titles.

When they function predicatively or in post position to a name, such forms are declined as masculine-gender nouns or modifiers. But when masculine-gender working titles precede a name and function with it as title, they are indeclinable.

NORMS	TEXT	DEVIATIONS
Marii	Redaktor Marii Sitak wyrazy głębokiego współczucia z powodu śmierci ojca. . .	redaktor Sitak
Maria	"To editor Maria Sitak, expression of deepest sympathy on the occasion of the death of (her) father. . .	editor Sitak

Redaktor Marii Sitak is dative. The first name Marii is declined. The masculine-gender forms Redaktor and Sitak are rendered indeclinable.

Koleżance Marii	Koleżance Marii Tatarkiewicz, pracownikowi Centrali RSP Kominiarzy w Warszawie. . . /Robotniczy spółzielni Polskich rzemieślniczej/	Tatarkiewicz, pracnikowi
To colleague Maria	"To Colleague Maria Tatarkiewicz, employee of the Central Workers Cooperative of Chimney-sweeps in Warsaw. . .	Tatarkiewicz, employee

Koleżance Marii is a feminine-gender dative declined phrase. The masculine-gender surname Tatarkiewicz is not declined. The referential Pracownikowi is declined as a dative masculine and occurs after the title Koleżance Marii Tatarkiewicz. The feminine-gender Pracownizcka exists and could have been used.

Here, however, Pracownikowi imparts a higher order of semantic meaning and engenders respect.

The linguistic phenomenon which I have just described can be approached and defined in a number of different ways. It is perhaps best described from two points of view; 1) that of grammatical mechanics, gender-marking--a basic level; 2) that of semantic function, the establishment of higher orders of meaning through gender-marking--a higher level.

Higher orders of semantic meaning can be created in Polish by employing the masculine-gender surname or the masculine gender title for women where there exists a choice of forms. Out of the more than 400 texts in my study, Nauczyciel was used three times more often than Nauczycielka when referring to women. Lekarka (doctor) was used once. Lekarz occurred 37 times. Doktor occurred 29 times; doktorka did not occur at all, undoubtedly owing to its pejorative meaning.[2] Logically, then, despite a growing use of masculine-gender referentials for women, such a phenomenon is relegated to areas where a choice of gender-marking could exist. Masculine-gender forms are used where they might impart honorific meaning. Feminine-gender titles with derrogatory connotations are not actively substituted where the masculine-gender form is commonplace for a male or female referend. It is also important to note that the texts cited in this discussion use the singular number. The number of examples in the plural was limited. And, despite the large number of deviations (slightly less than 50% of all forms

tabulated) the change in the gender-marking system does not appear to evidence premeditated mabiguity per se. The physical gender of each referend was quite clear from some "clue" within each text.

Notes

[1]The use of masculine-gender forms of surnames and working titles for women is more than a century old, yet it continues in contemporary standard Warsaw Polish. In 1880, Professor St. Tarnowski initiated discussion on this subject. In 1904, Roman Sawiliński, editor of the newly formed Poradnik językowy, campaigned against the use of masculinized forms. Despite early discussion of this topic, the controversy over masculinization of women's surnames and working titles has continued into this century and has been complicated by the increasing number of women occupying professional as well as non-professional positions traditionally held by men.

[2]Kenneth L. Nalibow, Genus versus Sexus, Herbert Lang & Cie, Bern, Switzerland, 1973.